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OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

OVERVIEW

The role of Registrar has existed since the beginning of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (NSW)* ('the Act' or 'ALRA') and was modelled on that of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations under the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976*.

The Registrar of the ALRA is an independent statutory office holder appointed by the Governor under the *Statutory and Other Officers Remuneration Act 1975*.

In 1983, the Registrar's role focussed on registration of land claims, constitution of land councils and land council boundaries. In 1996, the Registrar's functions were expanded to include the Register of Aboriginal Owners and joint management of national parks.

In October 2002, there were further major changes, in line with the 1998 recommendation of the Independent Commission Against Corruption to strengthen the position so it would have statutory authority to act as "an independent check and balance". The Registrar was given functions to give 'compliance directions' to land councils or land council office bearers, to mediate, conciliate and arbitrate disputes, and the power to investigate complaints about the non-disclosure of pecuniary interests and other breaches of the Act.

Further amendments to the Act in 2007 gave the Registrar further powers to investigate misbehaviour by councillors, Board members, consultants and staff of Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs), to suspend Councillors and Board members for misbehaviour, and make recommendations to the Minister about the appointment of investigators. The Registrar was also given responsibility for management of the consolidated LALC membership roll.

The current functions of the Registrar are broadly set out in section 165 of the ALRA.

The Minister administering the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* (currently The Hon. Victor Dominello, MP) oversees the performance of the Registrar's statutory functions. Whilst closely linked to the Minister, Aboriginal Affairs NSW and land councils, the Registrar remains separate and independent.